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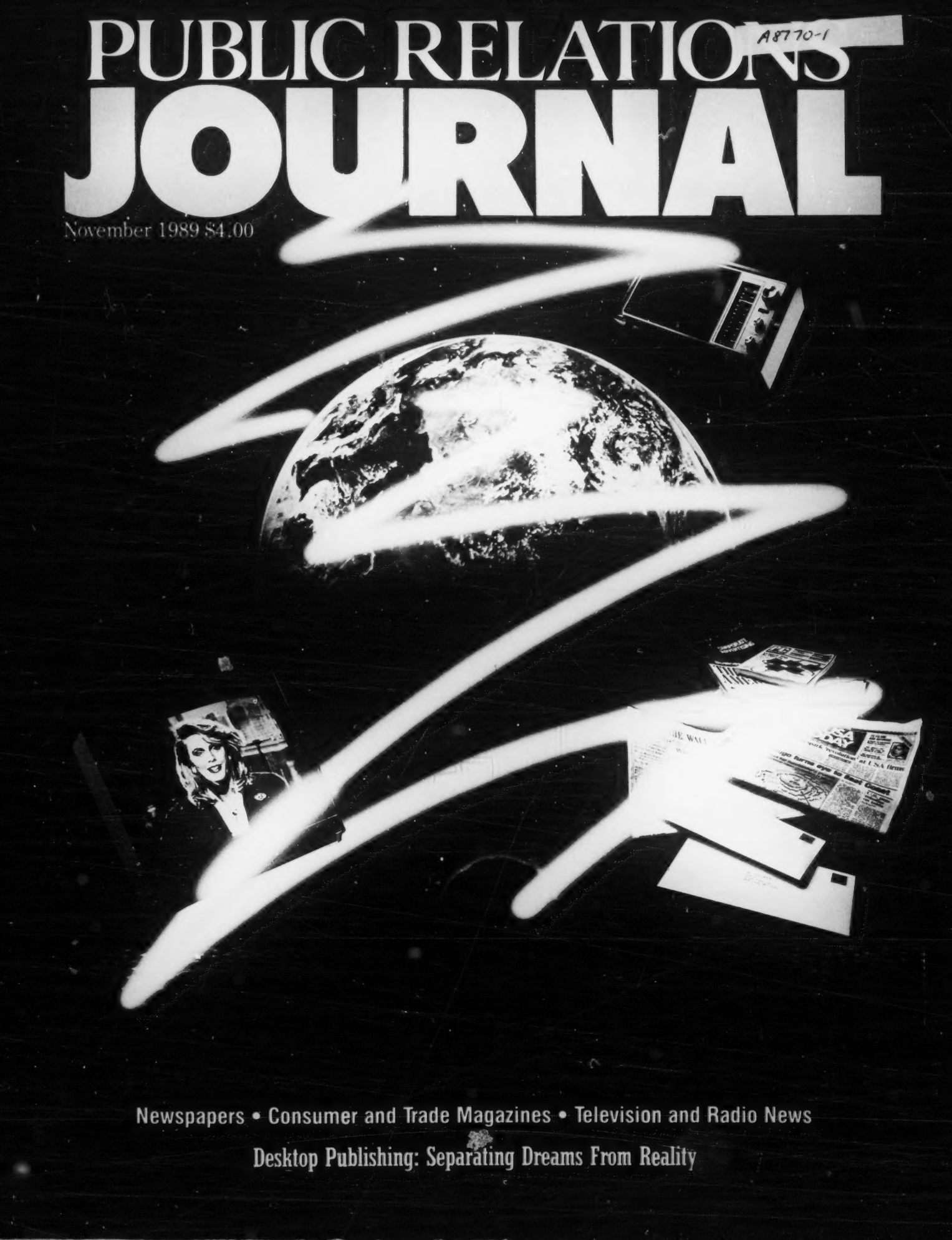


Newspapers • Consumer and Trade Magazines • Television and Radio News

Desktop Publishing: Separating Dreams From Reality

PUBLIC RELATIONS JOURNAL

November 1989 Vol. 45 No. 11

FEATURES

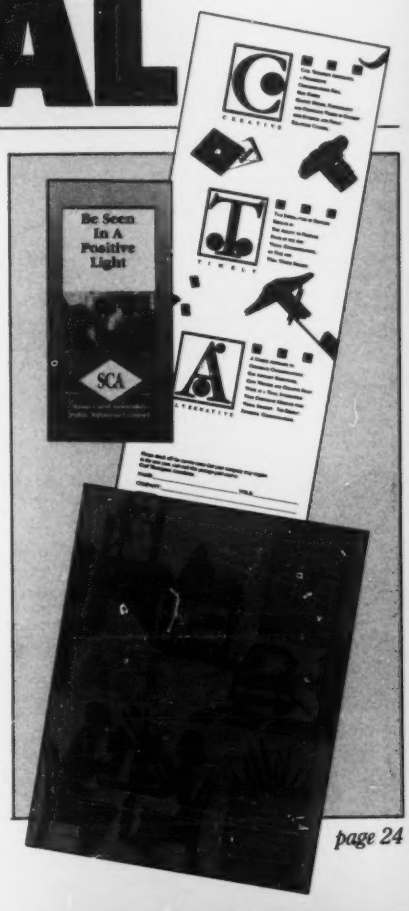
14 Media Relations: What's News? ***Special Section***

15 Print Media: Placement Strategies for the New Segmentation
The market forces that have pushed print media toward serving more and more specialized niches have also intensified competition among publications. Public relations practitioners and print journalists reveal their perceptions of how this new environment is altering traditional media relations and placement practices. *Mary Sabolik*

20 Television News: Riding the Shockwaves
Mergers and acquisitions, cable and other encroachers, and an increasingly thin line between news and entertainment mean major headaches for network producers—but new opportunities for savvy practitioners. *James F. Plante*

22 Using Radio News Today
With the advent of stations geared to specialized audiences, and the schism between AM and FM formats, practitioners seeking to harness the considerable power of radio news are finding that there's no substitute for listening and learning. *Bill Patterson*

24 Desktop Publishing: Separating Dreams From Reality
For many public relations firms and departments, DTP has already become an indispensable tool for putting out client and self-promotion materials. Still, there are some real potential pitfalls, and DTP isn't cost-effective for every operation. Practitioners share their good and not-so-good DTP experiences. *Judy A. Gordon*



page 24

BRIEFINGS

6 Overwhelmed cities increasingly seeking expertise of outside counselors • *PRJ* poll: Top '90s challenge is preparing for strategic roles • UK tests its first undergraduate PR program • Wooing the NFL to the Carolinas • Average cost of 1989 annual report: $3.52 • Quick Takes • Budget deficit: "Practitioners can help rally public to action" • Resources

WORKSHOP

31 Conducting special events in malls *Nancy M. Walters*

DEPARTMENTS

Inside Track ____ 4
So close, yet so far
Karlene Lukovitz

Feedback ____ 5

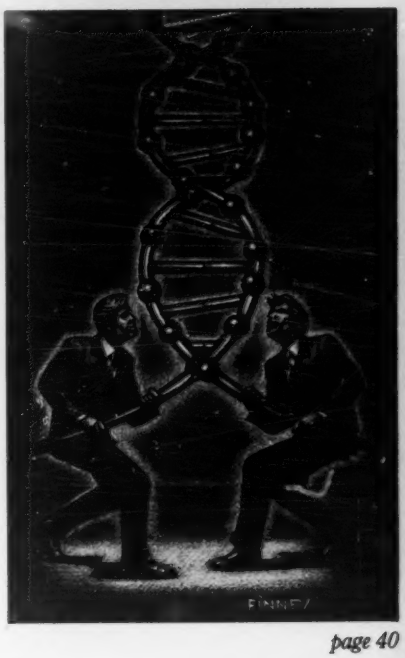
People ____ 34

Advertiser Index ____ 34

Literature Showcase ____ 35

Fast-Close Classified ____ 36

Marketing Public Relations ____ 40
An essential double helix
Glen M. Broom and Kerry Tucker



page 40

The *Public Relations Journal* is published monthly by the Public Relations Society of America, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003.

Cover illustration: *Lightscapes*

So close, yet so far

Recently, a few corporate executives have openly expressed the opinion that communicating with the media is just plain bad strategy.

According to this line of reasoning, giving any substantive information to the press amounts to volunteering your game plan to competitors.

Public relations professionals have heard this all before, of course, but it's still jarring to realize that business leaders can take such a blatantly cavalier attitude toward the media—particularly in the wake of the Exxon Valdez disaster.

This kind of short-sighted and ultimately self-destructive thinking is also particularly unfortunate at this juncture, when conditions are ripe for companies to build stronger working relationships with the media than ever before. As the sources quoted in our special section on media relations *(starting on page 14)* point out, the media's reduced resources and increased competitive pressures are presenting public relations professionals with an exceptional opportunity to change lingering, negative perceptions of the field among some old-line journalists and form strong, lasting bonds with up-and-coming members of the press.

Even major-market, "big-name" journalists are more receptive to, and attuned to the value of, truly professional public relations practitioners. They will work with practitioners who can offer them timely, audience-relevant ideas, the background and facts they need to shape those ideas into accurate, informative and meaningful stories, and straight answers to difficult questions. The more such pros they encounter, the more receptive they will be.

These competent media relations professionals are not produced overnight, however. The public relations profession is constantly striving to attract bright, young people and train them to embrace a market, make it their own, and become partners with the media people who are trying to serve the same market. It's a never-ending challenge to which the field gladly applies its resources, because it is its future. Whatever public relations specialty they may ultimately enter, practitioners will always use their media relations skills.

As a result of the profession's efforts, the caliber of practitioners dealing with the press has improved, although journalists say they still get too many calls from people who have no concept of how to help them serve their increasingly specialized audiences.

In the course of so much progress, it would be unfortunate indeed if media representatives now began to encounter a series of stonewalling corporate throwbacks masquerading as public relations people.

Karlene Lukovitz, Editor

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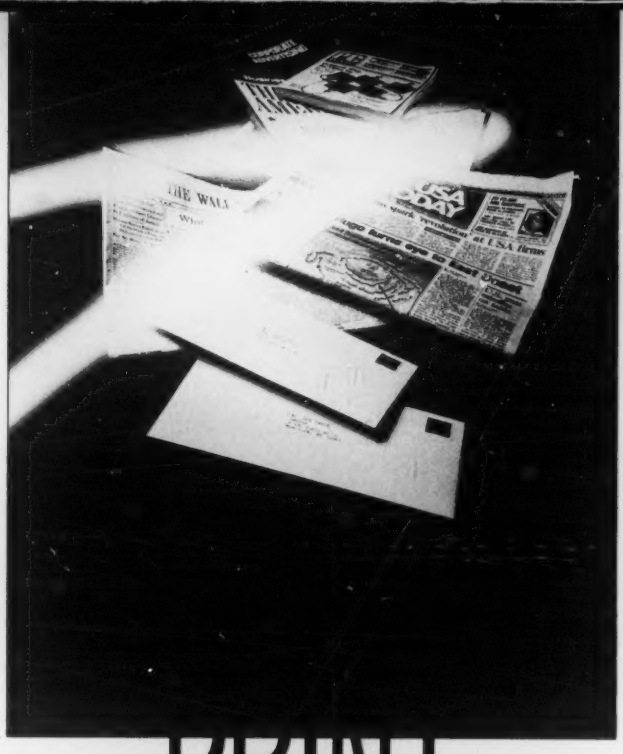


Photo: Lightscapes

PRINT MEDIA

Placement Strategies for the New Segmentation

Mary Sabolik

Today, it's possible to make more targeted and powerful placements in newspapers, consumer magazines and trade publications than ever before—*if* you understand why and how the needs of these media are changing...

What's happening in the world of print media can best be summarized by the words of John Emery, president of the Association of Business Publishers (ABP): "Segmentation is the name of the game." While it may not exactly be news, public relations practitioners and media representatives alike agree that this trend, which began in the 1970s, has contributed to nearly every major development in the print media in this decade and will continue to do so in the next.

The specialization is largely market-driven. As advertisers seek to reach specific segments of the consumer population, publishers try to deliver them, often by fine-tuning or otherwise adjusting their editorial product, and sometimes by spinning off or acquiring new properties. As Emery notes, "If you stand pat, someone else is going to go out and segment your market for you."

This trend, known as micro-marketing, doesn't stop there. A host of new, non-traditional advertising vehicles have entered the fray. Traditional print media outlets such as newspapers, consumer magazines, and specialized business or trade magazines are now faced with some entirely new competition aside from their old nemesis, the electronic media. Innovative marketing ideas such as wallboards or posters in schools and doctors' offices and devices such as electronic coupons at the supermarket cash register are growing in appeal and gaining the attention of major advertisers.

Micro-marketing is also having its effect on public relations goals and strategies. "Because of the necessity to reach different publics, clients increasingly are turning to different media categories," points out Jonathan Schenker, APR, vice president and director of media relations at Ketchum Public Relations. Most, he says, are now focusing on fewer, more targeted outlets. This less-is-more approach means looking not only at a publication's name and prestige, but paying more attention to its table of contents and asking, "Is this the best outlet for me?"

Not surprisingly, all of this has had a significant impact on media relations. "The days of the mass mailing producing boxes of clips are gone," says Sue Bohle, APR, president of The Bohle Company, Los Angeles, one of many practitioners—and reporters—who made similar comments. David Olmos, a staff writer who covers technology and aerospace for the Orange County edition of *The Los Angeles Times*, criticizes mass mailings as "a waste of clients' money." In their place is what Bohle calls "the belly-to-belly, or one-on-one placement." Schenker concurs, pointing out that the challenge now is "to target and shape and strategize even tighter."

Newspapers: Reformatting for survival

Newspapers have been hardest hit by the specialized publication explosion. As Gary Hoenig, editor of *News Inc.*, a new trade magazine covering the newspaper industry, has observed, "What was once the only source of information, and even recently the dominant source, is now just another alternative in a world drowning in information."

Reflecting this new reality, newspapers' circulation and share of ad dollars have been steadily losing ground. According to the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA), 1988 was the third consecutive year in which newspapers gave up share of total ad spending to other media. As reported in ANPA's *Presstime*, "Although newspapers remain the largest advertising medium, with overall newspaper expenditures growing 6.1 percent in 1988 to $31.2 billion, their share of the pie decreased half a percentage point, to 26.3 percent." Gaining, at newspapers' expense, were direct mail, the third largest medium by ad revenue, and television, the second largest.

Compounding this problem, growth in total U.S. weekday circulation was virtually stagnant in 1988, increasing a mere 0.2 percent from the previous year. And while morning circulation gained slightly (2.5 percent), evening circulation continued its 23-year decline, dropping 3.7 percent. Sunday circulation, which jumped 6.6 percent from 1986 to 1987 and had been considered an area of growth potential for many newspapers, was up a scant .18 percent.

Jim Dunaway, director of information for the Newspaper Advertising Bureau (NAB), tempers this information by noting that daily circulation is at an all-time high of 62.9 million, and that newspapers' share of total ad expenditures has remained fairly constant from 1982 to 1988, ranging between 26.3 and 27.2 percent.

Still, Dunaway admits that the slowdown in growth has contributed to a "conscious reduction in overhead" at many newspapers, which appears to be borne out by the experience of both reporters and public relations professionals.

Looking for input

Pete Lewis, computer columnist for *The New York Times*, finds that with the financial side flat or declining somewhat, there is a tremendous pressure on newspapers to contain costs, whether they are major dailies or smaller, less established publications. Lewis, a former assistant financial editor at *The Times*, says that because there are now fewer people on the editorial staff doing more work, the paper is less likely to give columnists free rein to go out and cover numerous events.

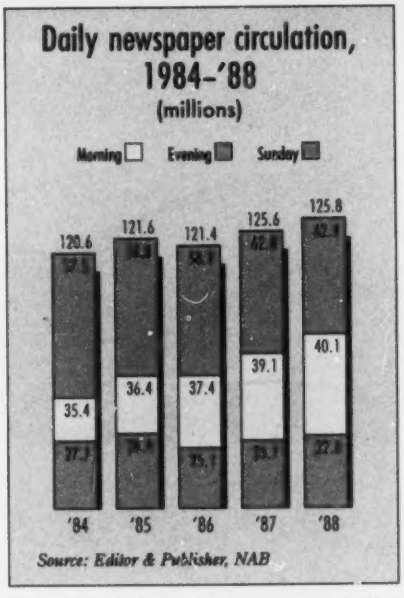
While this may make it tougher for practitioners to get reporters to press conferences, it also represents a real opportunity for increasing other contact. "Aware that dollars are scarce," says Lewis, "I depend more and more on PR people to keep me posted."

Lewis also observes that developments in the newspaper business closely parallel those in the industry he covers, computers: Both are maturing industries experiencing less rapid growth overall but constantly introducing new products or applications. He is well aware of the increased competition he faces from so many other business and computer publications: "I can't match the monthlies on depth of coverage and I can't match the weeklies on amount of coverage."

Instead, Lewis explains, he looks for items about new products and developments with practical applications for *The Times*' general audience of "informed, intelligent people," who can then turn to the wide array of nitty-gritty computer publications for more explicit information. Surprisingly, he finds that a great many public relations people don't understand this, and continue to approach him with esoteric material. Effective public relations people, he says, are the ones who know his readership.

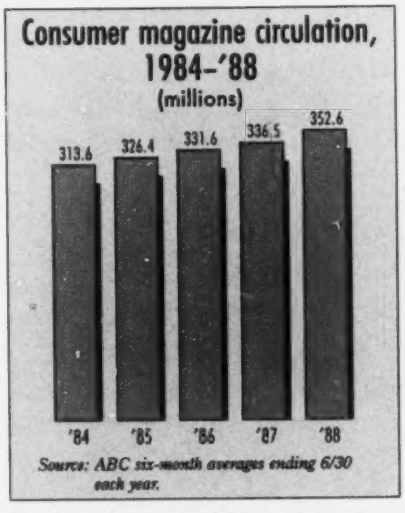
He also stresses that public relations people need to help reporters cope with the "leaner and meaner environment." This means that the standard press release will no longer suffice. Releases that get his attention, he says, have pitches truly tailored to his readership, and also identify the major points in a story, "not just spew out statistics."

"The smart PR people find the opportunities, present them and then break their backs to provide the resources to get the placement," concurs Charles Boyd, APR, corporate communications director for SundtCorp., a commercial and industrial contractor headquartered in Tucson, Arizona, who says he has indeed found new opportunities for placements in the many newspapers in his area that are struggling with limited resources.



Total circulation of U.S. dailies, including morning, evening and Sunday editions, has edged up by a total of 5.2 percent during the past five years, to 125.8 million in 1988.

Boyd, whose company operates primarily on the West Coast, works frequently with the editors of the business pages of many local and regional newspapers. Recently, he has been particularly successful with photo placements. He attributes this to having identified a need—newspapers' desire, but limited budget, for high-quality editorial photography—and to consistently filling that need.



Total per-issue circulation of consumer magazines rose 12.5 percent between 1984 and 1988, and the number of magazines audited increased from 473 to 541.

While the specific need and the resulting opportunity may be new, Boyd, who also teaches a course in public relations at the University of Arizona, stresses that "The essence of good media relations continues to be the ability to find a story idea that connects with a company goal but is also something the newspaper wants." Good media placements will always require hard work and a lot of homework, whatever the current needs or problems of a media outlet, he says, noting that even simple slip ups, like referring to a newspaper's "Business" section when they in fact call it the "Money" section, can alienate an editor and kill a conversation. He feels that you don't need to know reporters and editors personally, but that you do need to know how they work and what interests them in order to build long-term relationships.

Give us a graphic, please

Boyd's experience with photo placements and what he describes as a "higher demand for graphic look," is evidence of a newspaper trend that began several years ago and has since gained momentum: the use of sophisticated graphics to put a story across to readers.

Stuart Elliott, a business reporter who covers advertising and marketing for *USA Today*, whose colorful, graphics-packed format set other newspapers scrambling to emulate it, agrees that the trend opens new types of placement opportunities for publicists.

He points to *USA Today*'s "Snapshots"—the front-page box featuring statistical trends—as a prime example of the at-a-glance information that many newspapers are now providing. "It doesn't redefine the news," he says, "but it does redefine what a newspaper will publish"—a comment that underlines a growing similarity between print and television.

Bohle notes that, while surveys have always been good, "right now, art is key. The beautiful press kit just isn't important anymore; supplying artwork is more important." Newspapers are eager for everything from charts and graphs to photos and logos, she says.

Supporting these observations is a study in *Journalism Quarterly* last fall, conducted by Edward J. Smith and Donna J. Hajash of the journalism faculty at Texas A&M University. They analyzed use of informational graphics in a randomly selected, national sample of 30 newspapers for the week of October 28, 1986, and found that the number of graphics used ranged from seven to 63, with an

average of 31.6 per paper for the week.

The most frequently used types of graphics were maps, accounting for 46 percent of the total, followed by bar charts, at 17 percent. Although an increasing number of papers are moving to color presses (including *The New York Times*, which made quite a splash by announcing that it will add color to non-magazine Sunday sections within the next year or two), 88 percent of the graphics analyzed were in black and white, with only 5 percent in four-color. And, while slightly more than half the graphics appeared to be locally produced, non-local sources included syndicates, wire services, government agencies and public relations firms.

Hungry for business news

Elliott also mentions the continuation of another important trend in newspapers that can lead to new placements: the boom in business news. He notes that mainstream publications such as his own are now covering topics that were once the sole domain of trade publications. Elliott, whose *USA Today* advertising/marketing column appears about twice per week, points out that *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* have also beefed-up their coverage of advertising, marketing and media by instituting new columns and sections, as well as hiring reporters to cover these beats.

Some media watchers see traditional boundaries between print and other media breaking down

Though this may seem to be an indication of bigger editorial spending, such dollar outputs are closely linked to anticipated revenue returns. As *Inside Print* magazine reported last spring, *The Times* and *WSJ* "are busy expanding their coverage of business news in order to broaden their markets and recoup some of the revenue losses from the drastic drop-off in financial services advertising after the October stock market crash."

Newspaper journalists contend that, while public relations people have been quick to respond and contact these new outlets, many still fail to recognize that the increased competition among reporters covering these areas has led to more highly individualized coverage that combines reader demographics with a reporter's own interests and agenda.

Lewis, Elliott and many other reporters interviewed lament that they still are continually approached by people who clearly don't even read their publications.

Consumer magazines: Niches and cross-marketing

Nowhere is the segmentation of media outlets more noticeable than in the consumer magazine industry. Like amoebas, established magazine networks continue to divide and subdivide, spawning spin-off publications for more specialized audiences. As Jim Autry, president of Meredith Corporation's Magazine Division, recently told *Adweek*, "We're past the time where we can think of magazines like *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Good Housekeeping* or *Time* as institutions. Large magazine companies are learning to introduce special interest magazines."

One illustration of this is Meredith's recent venture, *Country America*, a lifestyle magazine for country music fans and those who enjoy the country way of life, published in association with The Nashville Network and Group W Satellite Communications. The magazine, the company's latest addition to a growing stable of successful special interest publications, has piqued the interest of other publishers and the advertising community by further stretching the definition of "value-added advertising"—a ubiquitous phrase among publishers that is shorthand for any merchandising or cross-marketing technique that may help lure advertisers.

Part of the magazine's strategy is offering advertisers the chance to have their print ads actually shown on television during airing of a country music show produced and distributed by Meredith's partners in the venture. The concept is considered by media-watchers to be another indication that barriers between print and other vehicles are breaking down—a trend being accelerated by the growing number of media conglomerates that own a variety of print and non-print vehicles.

Other indications of this direction include "magazines" being offered in floppy disk and cassette formats, and magazine names and formats lending themselves to a growing number of television shows. While advertisers may benefit from this trend, so may public relations practitioners: Placements originally made in magazines may be recycled and turn up in other formats. (Conversely, damaging stories may also get wider play.)

The new Time Warner, whose Time half was founded on the success of mass-market magazines, is also increasingly demonstrating a bent toward specializa-

Trade publications

Not pushovers anymore

If you still think that trade magazines—which now prefer to be called specialized or vertical business magazines—are guaranteed outlets for verbatim product releases and/or self-serving articles, guess again.

A recent survey of editors of 50 trade magazines in 16 different fields, conducted by Ketchum Public Relations, confirms that the trades' editorial capabilities and standards should not be underestimated. Asked how they prefer to obtain articles, for example, 28 editors said they prefer staff-written articles, while only nine said they prefer submitted pieces. (Thirteen said they use both.) Editors complained that submitted materials are too often incomplete or "puff pieces."

Asked to rate method of contact on a scale of one to five, one-on-one interviews were ranked highest by 32 editors, written materials by 20, in-person press conferences by six and editorial roundtables and telephone press conferences by two each. The researchers' not-surprising conclusion: Written materials cannot substitute for regular, personal contact with these journalists. And, practitioners are warned, "self-congratulatory pitches about products that have been on the market for five years" or free advertising posing as public relations are liable to backfire.

What kinds of issues do editors consider most important to their readers? Twenty-nine editors ranked current industry trends as most important. Respondents said that they want to know how innovations can be used to generate efficiencies today, not about pie-in-the-sky ideas that may yield results in 20 years. In short, while 20 editors ranked "technology applications" as very important, products do need to be positioned in the context of trends within specific, vertical markets—particularly given that 31 editors said they devote 30 percent or less of the space in their publications to new technology. Relatively few editors feel that information about a company's performance or "innovative management" is important.—*K.L.*

tion. In September, Time announced that it would launch its first trade magazine by totally repositioning its 50-percent-owned consumer health and fitness publication, *Hippocrates*, to direct it to physicians. The consumer version will continue with a new name, *In Health*.

In announcing the *Hippocrates* move, Christopher Meigher, executive vice president and group publisher of Time Magazines, said that while Time Warner wasn't contemplating a wholesale move into trade magazines, the company might consider spin-offs of other existing titles, such as a magazine for top financial executives derived from *Money* magazine.

Savvy practitioners also haven't failed to note that *Hippocrates* is only one of a growing number of magazines being run as partnerships or joint ventures. Often, these magazines are infused with capital by the big publishers, but controlled editorially and operated by the entrepreneurs who founded them—a type of arrangement that's emerged in recent years, as the giants have moved away from costly and risky in-house start-ups.

On the rebound

The motivation for all this is identification and ownership of new market niches that will attract additional sources of revenue. Publishers of consumer and general business magazines haven't forgotten the lean years they experienced only too recently. Advertising revenues were flat in 1985 and 1986, finally registering an increase of 5.5 percent in 1987, according to P. Robert Farley, senior vice president and general manager of the Magazine Publishers of America (MPA).

More aggressive marketing helped consumer and general business magazines to rebound in 1988, with ad revenues and pages setting new records and posting gains of 8.7 and 2.6 percent, respectively. Ad pages continued to surge upward in the first half of this year, setting another record high and jumping 4.4 percent above those logged during the first six months of 1988, which brought revenues up 12.4 percent, according to the Publishers Information Bureau (PIB).

On the other hand, advertising rate cutting is said to be more prevalent than ever, and some have questioned whether PIB's revenue estimates are for this reason somewhat inflated. Moreover, in the past few years, many companies that were once heavy advertisers have been directing their marketing dollars into in-store and other promotions that produce an immediate, short-term sales boost.

General business magazines were among those that suffered most from the mid-'80s lag in ad pages and the ripple effect of the stock market crash. William Glasgall, international economics editor at *Business Week*, maintains that his magazine "didn't get clobbered nearly as much" as many of its competitors, but acknowledges that "this is still not a time for runaway spending." However, he asserts that "the news dictates what gets spent," and that economic considerations have not affected his ability to travel and cover important events.

Meanwhile, the other consumer magazine revenue stream, circulation, also continues to grow: In total, it climbed 31 percent between 1977 and 1987, despite persistent declines in newsstand sales.

Competition among magazines is spawning 'dirty pool' placement tactics, some contend

Overall, Farley maintains, the outlook for magazines remains strong, given their exceptional ability for target marketing and some recent movement back toward putting dollars into advertising instead of promotion. He also notes that the market value of magazine properties continues to rise, making them "the hottest medium" for acquisitions. (Magazines surveyed by MPA/Price Waterhouse had, on average, a 12.4 percent pre-tax operating profit for 1988, down one percentage point from '87, but publishers attribute this to rising paper and other costs.)

Magazines that stay healthy, he adds, are the ones that are constantly changing in order to retain editorial vitality and stay "just a little bit ahead" of the competition. Often, the changes are subtle; the text type is slightly enlarged, a new column is added or an existing one revamped. With magazines now hustling more than ever to keep that cutting edge, practitioners who monitor key publications for new placement opportunities may also have an edge.

A wealth of new outlets

The relatively stable climate and the flowering of target marketing have encouraged new entries into the magazine market. According to the MPA, a total of 491 new publications were launched in 1988, substantially topping the average of about 400 new magazines a year. The top 10 launch categories and the number of new magazines in each were: sports (42), lifestyle/service (37), automotive (29), city/regional (27), computer (25), home service/home (24) and music (23). And, despite the daunting prospects for failure, 20 percent of each year's new introductions manage to survive after three years.

All of this means that those in media relations now have a vibrant new field of special interest consumer magazines from which to choose when implementing their own more targeted information distribution strategies for clients.

Jonathan Schenker of Ketchum Public Relations, who oversees the firm's media relations in nine offices around the country and writes a media relations newsletter called "Ketchum Contact," points out that changing demographics were responsible for the emergence of many of the new magazines introduced in this decade, and for the editorial repositioning of some existing ones. In 1987, he identified three key target generations: kids, or children of the baby boom generation; boomers, the baby boomers themselves; and late bloomers, parents of the baby boomers. All of these groups have the discretionary income coveted by major marketers.

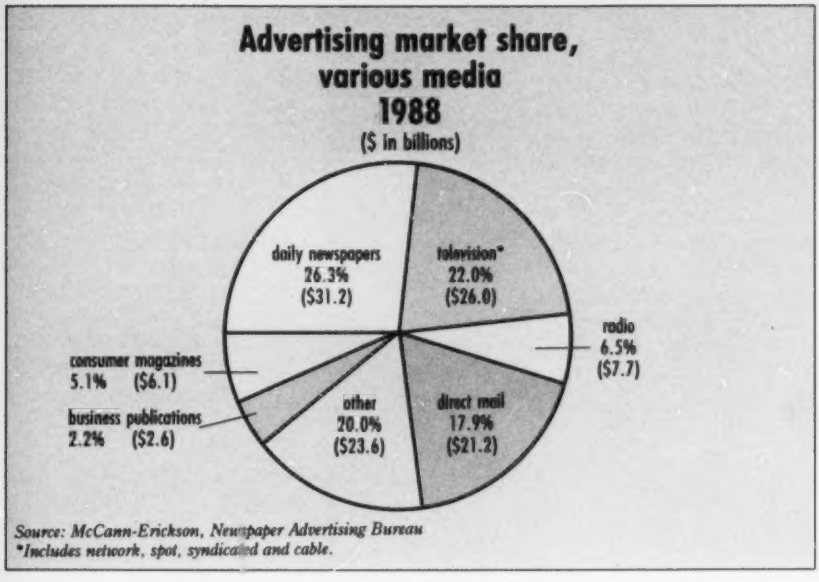
Today, Schenker says, the fastest-growing segments of the market are the younger and older generations. New magazines such as *Sassy* and *Teenage* serve the kids; *Mirabella*, *Grandparents* and *Lear's*, the late bloomers.

He also points out that there are now more magazines directed at minority and ethnic groups such as blacks, Hispanics and Asian Americans than ever before, and adds that many of his clients are increasingly looking for opportunities to reach these population segments.

"Naughty news" and questionable tactics

But Schenker also issues a warning: while these new magazines provide abundant placement potential, the competition among them is intense. One result is that "naughty news"—Schenker's term for gossip and celebrity journalism—has jumped out of the tabloids and into a variety of consumer and even trade publications. It is the foundation of successful magazine launches such as *People* and *Interview* and newcomers *Fame* and *Smart*, and it has made public celebrities out of Lee Iacocca and other business executives who in years past would have been stars only within the business/financial community.

Kim Mayner, a consultant working with The Terrie Williams Agency in New York, which represents prominent entertainers and sports figures such as Eddie Murphy and Jackie Joyner-Kersee, agrees that "Every day there's a new magazine, and it's necessary to know what the editors


Advertising market share, various media 1988
($ in billions)
daily newspapers 26.3% ($31.2)
television* 22.0% ($26.0)
radio 6.5% ($7.7)
direct mail 17.9% ($21.2)
other 20.0% ($23.6)
consumer magazines 5.1% ($6.1)
business publications 2.2% ($2.6)
Source: McCann-Erickson, Newspaper Advertising Bureau
*Includes network, spot, syndicated and cable.

Though increasingly struggling against other media, newspapers still dominate advertising market share, grabbing over 26 percent of 1988's total advertising expenditures of $118.4 billion.

want." But she's also noticed other fallout from the fierce competition among consumer magazines.

While the firm exercises selectivity with its more prominent personalities, deciding which publications are best for these clients and turning down the overtures of many others, Mayner says that the process of finding the right opportunity can be downright frustrating when handling emerging personalities who haven't yet been proven to draw readers. She also says that she has to contend with more public relations people who are resorting to what she calls "dirty pool" tactics, such as promising exclusives for certain celebrities or stories when guaranteed a magazine cover.

One person's "gossip," however, is another's useful background. A practitioner who is unaware of rumors may not only miss an opportunity to correct the record, but may lose some edge in positioning stories, even to traditional business publications. *Business Week*'s Glasgall remarks that, "Good PR people are good gossips —they're informed about the industry in which they are working." This, he maintains, enables them to "know the context" of a story they are pitching and answer the question: Why would someone want to read this?

Trade magazines: Worst and best of times

Trade magazines or "the specialized business press"—the term now preferred by the Association of Business Publishers (ABP)—pioneered the identification and targeting of print media niches.

Yet, like newspapers and their consumer counterparts, these publications are struggling to protect their market share. The ABP is reluctant, or perhaps unable, to provide actual figures, but president John Emery admits that "ad pages have been flat, not buoyant," since the crash and that dollar volume is up only because of rate increases. He also agrees that, "Where revenues are down, costs are being looked at very stringently."

Still, Emery feels that "these hard times are good times for PR people. If you can deliver a good product that is of interest to readers, editors are more amenable."

Is more less?

Although many trade magazines have paid circulations, and many with non-paid circulations have their circulations audited to demonstrate their viability to advertisers, some practitioners continue to doubt their communication impact. In fact, the proliferation of new vertical business magazines has made some more wary of these vehicles than in the past.

SundtCorp's Boyd, for instance, perceives the new non-paid trades covering construction, area development and related fields as "throw-aways" created solely as advertising vehicles, whose editorial content is "tainted" by advertiser concerns. "How many people actually read a publication that they get for free?," he asks. When he does occasionally work with the more targeted of these new, non-paid magazines, he says, he does so primarily with the goal of getting reprints to use as marketing devices. Otherwise, he concentrates placement efforts on the top trade books in his field, which are also non-paid, but are established and have "the editorial content necessary to ensure significant readership."

Betsy Nichol, president of Nichol & Company, a New York-based public relations firm, agrees that "many trade magazines are still influenced by who advertises." She recalls a recent experience with one client, a Fortune-500 company with many divisions. In trying to place editorial for the division she represented, she found it difficult to get results unless that division was an advertiser, regardless of whether other divisions were.

Others, however, take a less jaundiced view of the trades—and a recent survey conducted by Ketchum seems to indicate that trade publication editors are more selective and demanding than some practitioners may think. *(See sidebar, page 17.)*

Bohle, who represents many computer companies, says she sees no difference between trade magazines with controlled circulations and those with paid circulations. What she does find in dealing with various trades is that "Exclusivity is still a by-word for covers and first breaks."

Jeff Linton, an account executive at Dix & Eaton, a Cleveland-based public relations and investor relations firm, offers another perspective. Working primarily with publications in the health care and transportation industries, Linton has found that those with "fairly modest editorial staffs, by and large, are very willing to take the time to talk to you if you don't hype them, respect their time, give them a straight pitch, get their reaction, and get off the phone." But, he adds, "with leading books in the field, who have larger editorial staffs, it's often a very tough sell and a challenge to get their time and attention."

He also points out another important distinction, the difference between weeklies and monthlies, which he describes as "magazines that are attempting to cover trade *news* and those that are essentially feature magazines." He finds that the latter, which are less subject to the "intense pressure of producing a weekly publication," and offer more in-depth coverage, "are much more open to covering something a PR person might suggest."

The big picture

Two realities about today's print media keep cropping up in conversations with both journalists and public relations people alike: The work has gotten much harder, and time is at a premium.

Continued on page 35

Print Media

Continued from page 19

Part of this can be attributed to the overwhelming volume of reading material, another result of industry specialization. Bohle notes that compiling media lists has become much more difficult, and reports that her media directory bill now averages about $3,000 a year. And even though she believes that the cardinal rule is still to read the publications you're pitching, she confesses that the sheer volume makes it impossible to do this on a regular basis.

On the other side, *Business Week*'s Glasgall reports that he receives between 300 to 500 pieces of mail a week—about two or three large cardboard cartons worth—plus faxes and messages. He calls the volume "ungovernable" but trys to look at each piece, if only for a few seconds. If someone comes up with a good idea, he says, he'll read it.

There also seems to be considerable disdain for the "wining and dining" that once was such a requisite part of the business. As Nichol observes, "Everyone's busier and has less time for chitchat." Glasgall says that lunches with public relations people are not always productive. If an important company representative or member of the finance ministry is in town, however, he'll make the time. He'll also make time for a breakfast meeting to talk to a public relations professional who has an interesting idea.

Practitioners are also pressed for time. "There is no way to justify the time," says Bohle, "to just go out and make contacts." She has a more useful way of spending the three hours that might be devoted to lunch: reading that reporter's publication.

Supplying useful information instead of polite conversation may be the key. Jack Murphy, APR, manager of corporate communications for Genentech, Inc. in San Francisco, can point to an impressive placement track record. Yet he says, "This year, I have not had a lunch with a reporter for which he or she has not paid the check."

Murphy feels that this may be an indication of changing ethics in media relations. It certainly reflects a new attitude frequently alluded to by media and public relations representatives: Journalists are less afraid to admit that they often depend on public relations people for ideas, resources and other contributions.

Arthur Yann III, account supervisor at Nichol & Company, says success now means going *beyond* pitching ideas. "Reporters really appreciate a good story idea that you *follow up on* by providing additional sources to flesh out the idea." Genentech's Murphy has also found that "working in-depth has become more and more important." With the major national media, he adds, he must work to fit his stories into trend pieces and national business developments.

The positive outcome of this extra effort that Bohle, among many others, has discovered is that editors with whom she's developed a good story have remained contacts over the years. Even five years after a placement, she's often surprised to find how easy it is to get in touch with these people, once "they trust you as a source."

All of these experiences seem to demonstrate that print journalists and public relations professionals have entered into a new partnership that can be productive for both. Although it can often mean more work for less or limited coverage, many practitioners say that the quality of that coverage has never been better.

Mary Sabolik is president of Mary Sabolik & Associates, a New York-based public relations and special events planning firm that counts among its clients several media and communications companies. She was formerly associate director of public relations for Hearst Magazines and director of communications at Magazine Publishers of America.

TV News

Continued from page 21

ences and VNRs is more practical and cost efficient than ever. This and the proliferation of television outlets recently led Walt Wurfel, vice president for public affairs of the National Association of Broadcasters, to predict increased use and importance of such video tools. Satellite delivery may sound exotic and expensive, but it's cheaper and easier than dubbing hundreds of videocassettes.

Public relations practitioners must become as comfortable with broadcast techniques as they are with print techniques. This means more than talking the lingo; it means knowing how to apply it. It means communicating with broadcasters in much the same way they do with their audiences, for they are captives of their art.

I predict that the grumbling will die down sooner or later, and television news shops will find their new niche. Communicators who also find that niche will be effective. Those who don't may remain as unfulfilled as restless viewers seem today.

James F. Plante recently became vice president and general manager of E. Bruce Harrison Company/New York, Inc. Previously, he worked in news management for nine years at CBS News.

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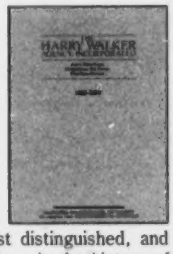

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